

Saint Francis

ART PRINT 21

GRADE 5, UNIT 5, SESSION 21

Catechist Guide page 125

Faith Focus: Caring for others is a foundation of a moral life.

OUTCOMES

- Describe how Saint Francis of Assisi dedicated his life to God.
- State the choice Saint Francis had to make.
- Explain why Saint Francis is the patron saint of animals.



About the Artist The artist of this painting is unknown; however, the tradition of batik has Indonesian origins. Some studies show wax-resistant dyeing techniques existed as early as the sixth or seventh century in Java and the northern region of Indonesia. Experts believe the traditional pattern making of batik was first used to illustrate early religious Hindu ceremonies. Colonial-era explorers and traders brought batik-patterned fabric back to Europe. Today the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, Netherlands, holds one of the largest collections of Indonesian batik.

Art-i-facts This painting of Saint Francis of Assisi is done in batik. Batik is a method of dyeing fabric with natural pigments, such as flowers, plants, animals, and earth. Wax is used to keep pigment or dye from covering certain areas, allowing the artist to make intricate and ornate designs with precision. Batik patterns were used to determine family lineage or status. Batik fabrics often include vibrant everyday scenes from Indonesian life.

For your convenience, the Children's Book page is reproduced below.

EXPLORE
ART PRINT
21

Name _____ Date _____

Art Print 21 shows Saint Francis of Assisi surrounded by birds, God's creations.
What in nature inspires you?

Saint Francis of Assisi

As a young man in the Italian town of Assisi, Francis (1181–1226), the son of a silk merchant, liked to go to parties and have fun with friends. He wanted to be a knight but was captured during a battle and held as a prisoner for ransom.

After his release from prison, Francis returned to Assisi but no longer felt he fit in. He began to notice people who were poor and sick, and he began to help them. One night in a dream, he received a call from Jesus to help rebuild his Church. Francis thought Jesus meant the small, rundown chapel at the edge of town. So he sold some goods from his father's shop to pay for the rebuilding. His father, very angry at Francis's action, disowned him. Francis gave back all his possessions to his father—even his clothing, and from then on wore only a brown cloak belted with a rope.

Francis dedicated his life to God and to the care of poor people. Although some people made fun of him for wearing such humble clothes and sharing the company of people who were sick and poor, Francis was happy and even danced with joy.

Eventually many others followed him, and he became the center of a community dedicated to helping others. Francis's simple brown cloak became the **habit**, or uniform, of his community of followers.

Francis's message taught many to see God's love, not material objects, as most important and fulfilling. His feast day is October 4.

Everyday Appreciation

On a separate sheet of paper, write how you can live the message of Saint Francis in your everyday life.



CATECHIST DIRECTIONS

MATERIALS

- Saint Francis Art Print
- Children's Book page 245

TIME



10–30 minutes

1 Begin

After completing page 125 in the Children's Book, display the Art Print.

Briefly introduce and discuss the artwork, using information from About the Artist and Artifacts.

Ask children what they notice about the picture of Saint Francis. **(There are several birds flocking to Saint Francis.)** Say: **Saint Francis is known as the patron saint of animals because he cared for all of God's creatures and felt more connected to God when surrounded by nature.** Ask: **When do you feel more connected to God?** **(Accept reasonable responses.)**

Invite children to reflect on the artwork and to pray a silent prayer asking Saint Francis to watch over the animals in their life.

2 Connect

Have children turn to page 245 in their books. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question. Invite volunteers to read aloud Saint Francis of Assisi. Ask children to underline two facts that they find interesting. Invite a few volunteers to share what they underlined and why they find it interesting. Say: **Francis decided to give up all his fancy clothes and money to wear a habit.** Ask: **What is a habit?** **(a uniform)** **What message was he sending by doing this?** **(Things like fancy clothes and money are not as important as caring for others.)** **What can we do to live like Saint Francis?** **(not value material things over God and others, donate money, volunteer at an animal shelter, recycle)** Write on the board or provide in a handout the following questions. When children have finished, invite them to share their answers. Ask: **What important decision did Francis make?** **(He gave up worldly things and dedicated himself to God and helping others.)** **Why was this decision a turning point?** **(Jesus became the center of Francis's life.)** **What happened as the result of his decision?** **(His father was angry and disowned him. Francis set an example of service that others followed.)** **How can we follow Saint Francis's example in our own lives?** **(dedicate our lives to God, help those who are poor, care about animals, appreciate nature)**

Allow time for children to complete the activity. Invite volunteers to share their answers.

IF TIME ALLOWS

If time allows, complete one or more of the activities below.

Expression: Music

Sing with Joy Play a piece of music to which the children can sing along, such as "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" [Finding God Grade 5 CD 2, Track 15]. As a group add hand gestures to help illustrate the words as children sing the song.

Time: 3 minutes

Materials: CD player, music such as "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" [Finding God Grade 5 CD 2, Track 15]

Expression: Art Studio

Patron Saint of Animals Tell children that Saint Francis was inspired by nature. Encourage children to make a mixed-media collage that shows what nature means to them. Provide magazines, fabric, buttons, sequins, sand, leaves, stones, and paint.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: construction paper, glue, art supplies

Expression: Using Imagination in Prayer

Appreciation for God's Creations Ask children to imagine themselves surrounded by nature, such as in green forest or atop a mountain. Say: **Feel the joy of God's creation in your body, heart, and mind and offer that joy to God. When we offer our joy to God, the joy can spread. Imagine your joy and gratitude filling this room. Amen.**

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: none

Saint Francis



Anonymous, 17th century.